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SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ESTONIA AND LATVIA

Letter dated 25 June 1993 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement by President of the Russian Federation B. N. Yeltsin of 24 June 1993 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 116 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV

* A/48/50.

ANNEX

Statement by the President of the Russian Federation
of 24 June 1993

Estonian authorities and legislative bodies have taken a number of actions to restrict the rights of the Russian-speaking population. These actions are unfriendly with regard to the Russian Federation. The law "on aliens" adopted in Estonia blatantly violates the legal, civil, property, social and fundamental interests of the Russian and Russian-speaking population. It in fact involves the practice of ethnic cleansing and the introduction of an Estonian form of apartheid.

Taking into account the combination of historical circumstances and being interested in maintaining good-neighbourliness, Russia sought to understand Estonia's policy and was open to compromise. It seems, however, that the Estonian leaders misinterpreted Russia's good will and, yielding to nationalist pressure, "forgot" about certain geopolitical and demographic realities. The Russian side has the means to remind them of such realities.

Russia considers the adoption of the law "on aliens" a premeditated breach by the Estonian side of the balance established in relations between Russia and Estonia and of existing political and diplomatic agreements. The principle of good-neighbourliness has been put into jeopardy.

Russia does not intend to tolerate infringement of the legitimate rights of the Russian-speaking population in Estonia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation has already taken diplomatic démarches to draw the attention of world public opinion to the policy of apartheid in Estonia. Apparently, this is not sufficient.

Russia's leaders will take all necessary measures to safeguard their national interests and protect the Russian-speaking population from political, social and police tyranny. The relevant departments have been instructed to take a set of measures ensuring the protection of the honour, dignity and legitimate rights of our compatriots, including servicemen, military pensioners, employees of military enterprises and members of their families.

Urging the Estonian side to reconsider its position with regard to Russians, I wish to give a warning: the complete responsibility for a possible breach of civil peace in Estonia will lie with the leaders of Estonia.

One cannot fail to understand that, given the natural desire of the Russian-speaking population to protect itself from blatant discrimination, Russia will be unable to remain a disinterested observer.

B. N. YELTSIN
President of the Russian Federation